

## Pair wines carefully with a feast

By Joan Obra / The Fresno Bee

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Thanksgiving dinner, like all meals with too many flavors, poses a dilemma. How do you pair wine with all those dishes?

Local wine merchants recommend various bottles, but they agree: Light wines are better than heavy ones.

At WineStyles in Fig Garden Village, co-owner Rudy Gallegos likes a fruity red "that doesn't go and overpower the meat."

Louis Jadot 2005 Beaujolais-Villages (\$13.99) is good, he says, as is Martin & Weyrich Winery 2005 Jack Ranch, Edna Valley Pinot Noir (\$21.99).

If you choose a pinot noir, Gallegos says, "you want one that's more fruit forward than earthy."

White wine lovers can try Steele Wines 2004 Cuvee (\$19.99), a chardonnay that pairs well with a traditional roasted turkey, Gallegos says. But a turkey with stronger flavors, such as a deep-fried one, works better with red wine.

Cranberry flavors pair well with Robert Hall Winery 2004 Hall Ranch, Paso Robles Grenache (\$26.99), Gallegos says. And for pumpkin desserts, he recommends two wines: Tobin James Cellars 2004 Liquid Love Late-Harvest Zinfandel (\$19.99) for rich desserts such as pumpkin cheesecake or deLorimier Winery 2005 Lace Late-Harvest Muscat (\$24.99) for pumpkin pie.

"This one is awesome, because it's light and elegant and sweet," he says of the Lace. "It's really, really yummy."

The Grape Tray at the northwest corner of Fresno Street and Shaw Avenue pushes chardonnay and pinot noir.

Fruit-forward chardonnay pairs well with a simple roasted turkey and buttery mashed potatoes, owner Stan Kato says. With these dishes, "the chardonnay is really refreshing."

The pinot noir "is a light red, and it works really well with cranberry and candied yam," Kato adds. It also would pair well with herbs in stuffing.

Kato's picks include Lemelson Vineyards 2004 Thea's Selection Pinot Noir (\$25.99) and Castle Rock Winery 2005 Monterey County Pinot Noir (\$10.29).

"It's one of those wines you taste and go, 'It's unbelievable that this is \$10,' " he says about the Castle Rock Pinot Noir.

Among the chardonnays, Kato likes Talbott Vineyards 2005 Kali-Hart Vineyard Chardonnay (\$9.69) and Chateau St. Jean 2004 Robert Young Vineyard Alexander Valley Chardonnay (\$21.49).

But for desserts such as pumpkin pie, Kato prefers coffee.

**"My wine-drinking is for the dinner," he says.**

Vino 100, the chain known for selling 100 wines for less than \$25, is recommending four varietals for Thanksgiving dinner. Called "4 for Sure," they are riesling, pinot grigio, Beaujolais and pinot noir, says Chuck Van Fleet, co-owner of Vino 100 in the Via Montaña shopping center at Champlain Drive and Shepherd Avenue.

Van Fleet has his own favorites. A simple roasted turkey with herbs and butter, he says, would pair with rieslings, pinot gris or Beaujolais nouveau, the young, fruit-forward wines released every November from the Beaujolais region of France.

Beaujolais nouveau also would work well with cranberry relish, he adds.

For folks who serve honey-baked ham, Van Fleet recommends the Muse Winery 2004 Génie (\$15). That blend of chardonnay, Gewürztraminer, muscat and viognier "is not going to be too sweet," he says. "The Chardonnay mellows it out."

Pumpkin desserts pair well with sweet wines, he says, such as La Serra 2005 Moscato D'Asti (\$16) from Calamandrana, Italy.

But Thanksgiving may not be the best time to try unfamiliar wines, he adds.

"I thoroughly believe that if you enjoy a deep, dark, heavy cabernet, syrah or zinfandel, then drink it," Van Fleet says. "You can tailor some things to your menus, but you've got to drink what you enjoy."

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